

INTERNATIONAL TRADE ASSISTANCE AND FINANCE

International trade (importing and exporting) are regulated by the U.S. Government and generally not by state and local government. The Federal Government offers excellent sources of assistance. Several Virginia agencies and private sector companies also assist businesses in the basics of exporting and importing.

Trade Information Center

The Trade Information Center (TIC) is the first stop for exporters seeking federal help. The TIC offers comprehensive counseling on all federal government export assistance programs and the export process in general, as well as country-specific expertise on Asia, Latin America, Africa, Western Europe and the Near East. The TIC is operated by the International Trade Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce for the 20 federal agencies that manage the U.S. Government's export promotion programs and activities. TIC's trade specialists can help exporters access foreign tariff information market research, trade leads and regulations, and on-line government documents relating to export promotion and international markets. The staff can also direct callers to local trade offices and private organizations that provide export assistance.

Contact: For more information, please contact *TIC at 1-800-USA-TRADE (1-800-872-8723)* or visit their website at *<http://tradeinfo.doc.gov>*. For TIC's address, see the appendix.

USA Trade Center

The USA Trade Center is located in the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC and brings together key components of the U.S. Department of Commerce to provide a range of export counseling and information to the public. The Center contains a high-tech international Trade and Business Information Bookstore offering reference and general interest publications, periodicals, electronic resources, foreign language materials and tapes, and other resources including export counseling and country expertise, assistance with export control or licensing inquiries, U.S. Foreign Commercial Service products, STAT-USA, an on-line trade leads and market information service, and assistance on overseas business opportunities financed by international development banks.

Contact: For more information, please contact the *USA Trade Center at 1-800-USA TRADE (1-800-872-8723)* or visit the Center's Internet home page at *<http://ustc.doc.gov>*. See the appendix for the address of the USA Trade Center .

Northern Virginia Export Assistance Center

The Northern Virginia Export Assistance Center is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. It offers export marketing and trade finance support for small and medium sized firms. The Center is a federal interagency effort that combines services and programs of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIMBANK), and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Trained export counselors work with clients to evaluate their needs and help them develop customized international business strategies to compete in the global marketplace. In addition, the Center assists

in obtaining export credit insurance, pre-export financing and medium and long-term loans.

Contact: For more information, please contact *the Northern Virginia Export Assistance Center at (703) 524-2885*. See the appendix for the address of the Northern Virginia Export Assistance Center.

Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)

VEDP's Division of International Trade Development assists Virginia businesses in their efforts to introduce and sell products and services abroad. Export consulting, marketing assistance, international market information, market planning programs, export publications, and export financing assistance are provided to Virginia businesses interested in pursuing foreign sales opportunities. Marketing assistance is provided through trade and catalog shows, trade missions, and buying groups.

Contact: For more information, please contact VEDP's *Export InfoCenter, Division of International Trade Development at (804) 371-8123*. See the appendix for VEDP's address.

Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ)

There are five *Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ)* located in Virginia, including one at Washington Dulles International Airport, where businesses may forward their goods for storage, for an unlimited period of time, while awaiting favorable market conditions in the U.S. or abroad. No duties are paid on goods that are re-exported.

Contact: For additional information, please contact the *Virginia Economic Development Partnership* at the number listed above.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Export Financing Programs

The *International Trade Loan Program* provides financing for small businesses that are engaged or preparing to engage in international trade, or that have been adversely affected by competition from exports. The SBA can guarantee loans of up to \$1 million for fixed assets and up to \$250,000 for working capital.

The *Export Working Capital Program (EWCP)* provides loan guarantees for loans used to: finance labor and material for manufactured goods for export; purchase goods or services for export; or finance accounts receivable generated from export sales. SBA can guarantee 75 percent on loans up to \$750,000 or 80 percent on loans of \$100,000 or less.

Contact: For more information on the international trade loan and export working capital loans, contact *SBA at (202) 606-4000*. See the appendix for the SBA's address.

Export-Import Bank of The United States (EXIMBANK)

EXIMBANK is an independent federal government agency that provides export financing to large and small businesses and to potential exporters who have difficulty obtaining working capital loans from commercial lenders. EXIMBANK financial assistance is provided in the form of direct loans, insurance and loan guarantees for lenders to foreign buyers of goods and services produced in the

United States.

Contact: For more information about specific EXIMBANK Programs, contact Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIMBANK) at (800) 565-3946. See the appendix for EXIMBANK's address.

Virginia Small Business Financing Authority (VSBFA)

Export Financing Assistance

The Virginia Small Business Financing Authority (VSBFA) works in partnership with the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIMBANK) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide export financing assistance to qualified Virginia exporters. VSBFA helps Virginia exporters to access EXIMBANK and SBA guarantees by packaging and submitting applications according to federal guidelines. Once an approval is obtained, VSBFA can assist the business in finding a bank to finance the transaction.

Contact: To discuss financing needs with a VSBFA export financing specialist, contact *VSBFA at (804) 371-8254*. See the appendix for VSBFA's address.

Importing Requirements

The U.S. Government publishes *Importing into the United States*, a guide to documentation and regulations related to the import process. It is available through the U.S. Government Printing Office by calling (202) 512-1800. The *U.S. Customs Service* also provides tariff rates for tariff information for specific imported products by calling (202) 482-6900. Generally, federal and state governments do not provide assistance for businesses interested in importing. The Commercial or Trade Attache of the embassy of the country your business is interested in is a good source for information on importing. Import information may also be obtained from the various port authorities, customs brokers and forwarding/receiving agents.

Certificate of Origin

Many foreign nations require a signed statement, known as a Certificate of Origin, to accompany the goods entering their country. The certificate identifies the origin of the items. The Alexandria Chamber of Commerce provides this service for \$20 to its members, and for \$40 to non-members.

Contact: For more information, contact the *Alexandria Chamber of Commerce at (703) 549-1000*. See the appendix for the Chamber's address.